

Voting Ladylike, Says Woman Who Tries

Special Congress Elections on Tuesday the First Chance for State's New Citizens to Cast Their Ballots



Jerome F. Donovan, running for Congress in the 21st district.

By ELEANOR BOOTH SIMMONS.

I REGISTERED last Saturday as a preliminary step toward voting for a Congressman from my district at the special election on March 5, and I can truthfully say that I never had a more ladylike experience in my life. If that is politics I would advise the shrinking type of woman to go into it as a regular occupation. She would thus avoid the rude and rough occurrences that are apt to assail one in almost every line of life.

On the way to market I dropped into the candy store where I have frequently gone to buy bonbons, but not boubons but the vote was now my quest. In the rear of the store four men, one of them a policeman, sat grouped around a table on which were spread out large white blank-books and pens and ink. All of the men except the policeman, who appeared to be enjoying a little sleep, arose as I approached, while a glad some and welcoming smile beamed out from all three countenances. They were nicely dressed, their collars were spotless and there wasn't a spittoon in sight.

Deference at Polls Disconcerting.

It was embarrassing to have them all get up that way to greet me. Society ladies are accustomed to this sort of thing; I have seen it done in exclusive hotel dining rooms when a lady joined a party, but deference like this in a polling booth and to me, a voter, sort of upset all my preconceived notions about things. However, I soon perceived that the glad some greeting was due to the fact that they had been waiting for an hour since opening for business at 10, and since the first three women, who were waiting in line to be the first to register, not a woman had appeared and consequently they were bored to death with themselves and each other.

In the politest manner they asked me some questions about myself, and when it came to the one about age they said that if I preferred I could just say, "Over 21." They said the law about telling your age only related to men.

Having put all the facts about how old I am and where I live and what I do for a living and if I registered in the military census and so on down in the blank-books and requesting my signature to the same, they became talkative. And the burden of their conversation was sincere regret that so few women were registering. One of the men, the Republican captain in that election district, had been unable to get his wife out—she didn't want to vote, he couldn't persuade her to vote, and a gloom like a pall overspread his features as he made the confession.

From his tone and manner you would have supposed that he was telling you that his wife was neglecting the baby or had struck against cooking his dinner.

There was absolutely nothing of the atmosphere of abominable staidness existing in politics that I have supposed existed

among practical politicians. On the contrary, when I proceeded to wander into other registration places in order to get a line on the situation and find out if my experience was unique or merely typical I found that the more practical they were the more anxious they were to have their women come out and take an interest in the election.

In a barber shop on upper Broadway a Tammany district leader, who had just courteously escorted his wife to the registration table, positively beamed as he watched her answer the questions. Then he escorted her to the pavement, where their infant awaited them in its go-cart, stood watching as she sailed off homeward with several other craft of the baby carriage fleet that the sunshine had brought out, and returned to loaf around the outskirts of the registration table and keep an intelligent eye on proceedings.

I didn't hear one woman say that her husband had quarrelled with her because she came out to be a voter. I couldn't uncover the slightest evidence of any fire-side being broken up because she was strong minded and he wouldn't have it. The first time I hung around a group of women who were explaining to one another why they were registering, this is what I heard: "Awful busy" . . . "didn't seem as if I could spare the time." . . . "I wanted to make that pudding you gave me the recipe of for my husband's dinner, but he said I'd got to get out and vote."

Politicians Appear Indifferent.

True politicians didn't bestir themselves in any of the four districts where elections are to be held to rout out the woman vote as they always have bestirred themselves to get out the male vote. Barring individual cases of husbands with wives or men with their sisters or mothers they just sat back and let things take their course.

The woman vote being an unknown quantity and no one being able to guess what way it was going, this seemed the wisest plan. No Republican ward leader was going to spend time and energy and automobile hire on getting out what might prove to be a bunch of votes for the Democratic candidate. No Democrat or Socialist or anything else was going to take such chances either. For it cannot be denied that male interest in woman's turning out in large numbers to avail herself of the right that was granted her last November has a strong partisan bias one way or another. But it is interest, that is the point, and one can't expect it not to be partisan. Politicians are but human.

There was only one drawback to one's pleasure in contemplating that initial entrance of New York women into real politics on Washington's Birthday and the day following, and that was the lack of enthusiasm among the women. Somehow, having associated a lot with the suffs, I got into the way of picturing all women, or at least great numbers of them, as tremendously eager to take part in choosing the officials of the Government.

I envisioned my sex waiting in lines outside the registration places, a sort of holy thrill pervading them. I wasn't even thrilled myself. As time went on after registering I began to take a solid satisfaction in the thought that I was now out of the ranks of the idiots, the criminals and the insane and that I was to cast a vote for my Representative in Congress, though I did wish I knew more about the candidates. After seeing the candidates I did wish they were a more imposing lot. However, there was a satisfaction.

But lots of women in those four districts didn't seem to know or care that there was an election and they were in it. There were, or rather there are, four Congressmen to be chosen to fill the unexpired terms of four who have resigned, and the coming year in Congress may be the most momentous in history; one man's vote there may change far reaching war policies; and in a whole house you canvassed you would find perhaps only one or two women, perhaps not any, who knew or cared about it.

It made one think depressing thoughts about one's sex. I told Big Boss Mary Garrett Hay of the Woman Suffrage party about it.

"Is it worth while," I asked her, "to have labored as you suffs have and had parades and street meetings and hung around the Legislature and sent out millions of circulars to get the vote for a sex that in many cases is so immersed in household duties or clothes or babies or gossip that it doesn't even register to vote?"

Boss Hay laughed.

"Lots of men are just as indifferent," she said. "Plenty of men in those districts don't even know there is to be a special election. Considering the handicaps, I consider the registration of women last Friday and Saturday very good indeed. The women came out better than I expected."

Only Two Days to Register.

"Last fall the men were allowed a whole week to register. The women had just one day and two evenings. The first evening there was a blinding snowstorm, and then the Camp Upton boys were in town and the women had been out watching their husbands and sons or sweethearts in the parade and they were going home with them for their furloughs. I don't blame the women for wanting to stay with their boys."

"It was Washington's Birthday too, a holiday, and the next day was the Jewish Sabbath, when no good Jewess would go out for any secular business. The candidates were named such a short time before registration that hardly anybody had a chance to know them, the newspapers have had very little about the election and there was no general interest such as there is in a general election. No posters, no



Anthony J. Griffin, candidate in the 22d Congress district.

publicity, hardly any meetings—why, you couldn't expect a big turnout of women."

"The New York City Woman Suffrage party did its best to spread the news that an election was coming in those districts and that it was up to the women to get out and prove that they valued the right that was now theirs—and we did get out a lot too. And from 10 o'clock Saturday until we left the headquarters at 3 East Thirty-eighth street that night our telephone bell never stopped ringing with the calls from women who wanted to know where they could register. That shows interest, doesn't it? Certainly."

Then Miss Hay pointed out that a registration of 30,000 women in four Congress districts in a minor election was no mean showing. It is rather imposing to take the number as one fact. Watching them come along by dribbles at this registration place and that it did seem as if the women weren't turning out, but there were many of those places, and each with a registration of from perhaps twenty or thirty or forty to 125, as was the case with one election district on the Heights in Brooklyn, made up rather a good roll.

Brooklyn did better than Manhattan. Brooklyn's banner district, the Eighth Congress, produced 11,589 woman registrants—almost; a few were men who for one reason or another didn't register last fall. Manhattan's best district, the Twenty-first Congress, showed a total of 11,563. The Seventh Congress in Brooklyn had 8,116 registrants and the Twenty-second in Manhattan had but 6,355. The total number of registrants, some 37,000, included perhaps 7,000 men. The remainder were the vanguard of the coming woman vote.

About 25 Per Cent. Listed.

According to the figures currently accepted the total number of women who might have registered in the four Congress districts is 131,000. More than 25 per cent. of these did actually register.

Now in 1914 there was a special election, and the question at issue was an important one, the remaking of the Constitution of the State of New York. The total registration of men voters in New York city in 1913 for a general election was 667,609. The total New York city vote on the new Constitution was 103,401. Only 16 per cent. of the men who registered in 1914 for general elections carried over enough interest, cared enough about the State Constitution to vote on it.

No, men as well—or as ill—as women have not waked up to the fact that a special election is just as important in its way as the noisiest orgy in which we indulge when selecting a President or a Mayor or something like that.

There's one thing certain—the women are going to be intelligent voters. If they're not, Boss Hay of the city suffs wants to know the reason why. For ever since it was known that these special elections were to be held, yes, ever since women got the vote, the New York City Woman Suffrage party has conducted a clean, winning campaign and the science of government and so on without ceasing.

Cold Aids Opticians By Splitting Frames

"THE combination of a severe winter and the increased use of shell framed eyeglasses has made the season a profitable one for us," remarked a Fifth avenue optician.

"The increase in income has not been the result of the sale of more lenses, although that has added to the total somewhat, but rather the larger sale of shell frames. And the cold was the cause of it all."

"Few of those who wear shell framed glasses know that the frames are susceptible to changes in temperature. For instance, you can't take the glasses from indoors, where the temperature is warm, to the outside, where the temperature is cold, without risk. The sudden change is liable to crack the frames. Frames that are cracked can't be repaired and the only alternative is to have the frames replaced, which is expensive."

Temperature affects the shell in the same manner as it does steel. When the

temperature is warm the shell will expand and when it is cold the shell will contract. If the shell is subjected to the change suddenly the wearer will hear a sharp cracking sound and if he examines his glasses closely he will find that the frame has split open. The reason for the split is that when the shell contracts either it or the glass itself has to give. The glass won't, so the shell has to.

Those who have been unfortunate enough to have had spectacle frames cracked during the cold weather, and have not had them repaired are in danger of injuring their sight. The lenses are so placed in the frames that the focus is absolutely correct. If the frame is cracked the tension on the glass is released considerably and there is a possibility of the glass shifting. If this occurs the proper focus is destroyed and the wearer's eyes are put in danger.

"All wearers of shell framed glasses should be particularly careful not to subject them to sudden changes in temperature."